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TAKING COMMAND IN THE ARCTIC: THE NEED FOR A COMMAND ORGANIZATION IN THE ARCTIC THEATER

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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October 31, 2008

Abstract

Taking Command in the Arctic: The Need for a Command Organization in the Arctic Theater
Changes in the Arctic give rise to emerging security challenges at the strategic and operational levels. These challenges include territorial disputes, the potential of new maritime shipping routes, and increased access to highly valuable natural resources. In response to these challenges, international state and commercial interests are moving forward to protect claims and prepare for emerging opportunities in the Arctic. At present, no single Combatant Commander has the lead for meeting the challenges of the Arctic. Unless the United States takes unified action, it may lose diplomatic, informational, military and economic advantages associated with the Arctic. In order to meet the emerging challenges of the Arctic, the U.S. Northern Command must develop and implement a command organization to effectively project U.S. presence, protect national security interests, and coordinate military, interagency, and international efforts in the Arctic theater. This paper analyzes current U.S. policies and strategies that apply to the Arctic and current command organizations that may serve as a model for the Arctic theater. The paper finishes with conclusions concerning the challenges in the Arctic, implications for the Combatant Commander, and recommendations for an effective command organization.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

According to Magna Hanna's 2006 *Naval Proceedings* article "Into the Dark and Out of the Cold," the importance of the Arctic as a theater of operations was first demonstrated during World War II. U.S. maritime convoys supplied northern Soviet Union ports while the U. S. Coast Guard patrolled the east coast of Greenland for German naval forces. Following World War II, the Cold War period was characterized by increased U. S. Navy submarine and icebreaker activities to project U.S. presence and deter Soviet exploitation of the region.[1]

Today, the Arctic theater is becoming more accessible due to an increase in the melting of sea ice which previously prevented Arctic surface operations during most of the year. However, the current U.S. icebreaker fleet consists of only one vessel dedicated to patrolling Arctic waters[2], which significantly reduces sustained visible U.S. presence in the region. Increasing access to the Arctic theater gives rise to new national security challenges, including emerging territorial disputes, the potential of new maritime shipping routes, and increased access to highly valuable natural resources.[3] While the Arctic theater is not specifically addressed in the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), the U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS), or the U.S. National Military Strategy (NMS), the NDS does call upon the U.S. and its Armed Services to "secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action."[4] The three main challenges created by new Arctic conditions fall under this guidance in the NDS as well as other key national and defense policies and doctrine.

At present, no single Combatant Commander has the lead for meeting the challenges of the Arctic. Unless the United States takes action, it may lose diplomatic, informational, military and economic advantages associated with the Arctic. In order to meet the emerging challenges of the Arctic, the U.S. Northern Command must develop and implement a

command organization to effectively project U.S. presence, protect national security interests, and coordinate military, interagency, and international efforts in the Arctic theater.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ARCTIC

The 2001 *Naval Operations in an Ice-Free Arctic Symposium Final Report* stated that "Vessels and aircraft operating in the Arctic have reported diminished summer ice coverage and scientific models consistently suggest that seasonal sea lanes through the formerly ice-locked Arctic may appear as soon as 2015."[5] The report further conjectured "that summertime disappearance of the ice cap could be possible by 2050 if this trend continues. The implications for national security and by extension, the impact on naval operations, are significant."[6] Recent data from 2008 suggests that Arctic ice is melting at a faster rate than previously thought, which has some experts predicting an ice free Arctic summer as early as 2030 or even possibly as early as 2013.[7] For the U.S., the impact of an ice-free Arctic is likely to result in "an increased scope of naval operations" in order to ensure U.S. access to the sea space and stabilize the global commons.[8]

Increased accessibility to the maritime Arctic region has highlighted recent territorial disputes which fall under the provisions of the United Nation's Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). UNCLOS allows signatory countries to claim rights to "Arctic seabed resources up to 350 nautical miles offshore if they can find extensions of their continental shelves underwater."[9] Current territorial claims involve five nations: Russia, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the United States.[10] However, the U.S. has not yet ratified UNCLOS. The competing claims by Russia, Norway and possibly Denmark for the seabed under the North Pole[11] exemplify the serious disputes over Arctic territory.

The claims for Arctic territory are closely related to the potential natural resources that lie under the seabed. While the types of natural resources are varied, the largest and most economically valuable of these are oil and natural gas. According to a U.S. Geological Survey assessment released in 2008, the area north of the Arctic Circle contains "13% of the undiscovered oil, 30% of the undiscovered natural gas, and 20% of the undiscovered natural gas liquids," with 84% of these oil and natural gas reserves estimated to be offshore.[12] The Alaska Arctic region has the largest potential oil deposits while Russia's West Siberian basin has the largest potential natural gas reserves.[13]

Almost as valuable as the untapped resources in the Arctic are two main potential shipping routes through Arctic waters, the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage. The use of either route would mean an increase in shipping traffic in U.S. waters, but none more than the Northwest Passage. The strategic economic value of the passages is derived from significant reductions in transit time. An open Northern Sea Route from Asia to Europe via the Bering Straits would reduce the maritime route between Rotterdam and Yokohama from 11,200 nautical miles to 6,500 nautical miles.[14] Likewise, the distance from Asia to the East Coast of the U.S. via the Northwest Passage would save more than 4,000 nautical miles compared with passage through the Panama Canal.[15] The Northwest Passage, a route once thought not to be economically feasible, was actually open in 2007 to seagoing vessels for the first time in modern history.[16]

An opening of the Northwest Passage is likely to bring a thirty year old international disagreement between Canada and the U.S. to the forefront. In the late 1960's, Canada informed the U.S. that it considered the waters through the Canadian archipelago as territorial waters of that country.[17] The U.S. maintains that these waters are an international

strait with the accompanying right of transit. To maintain its position, the U.S. sent the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Polar Sea through these Canadian waters in 1985.[18]

The value of the Arctic theater for increased territory, natural resources, and more economical shipping routes has triggered a corresponding increase in military and commercial activity in the Arctic theater by several countries. Russia's actions and rhetoric in 2007 and 2008 strongly suggested that Russia would protect their interests in the Arctic. Russia sent bombers close to the North Pole, planted a titanium Russian flag underwater on the North Pole, and a top Russian military general "suggested Russia's military strategy would shift towards 'protecting national interests' in the Arctic."[19] Canada also announced plans for increased activities in the Arctic. The Canadian government intends to spend over $3 billion for new Arctic patrol vessels, create an Arctic warfare training center, an Arctic deepwater seaport, and launch a surveillance satellite to track Arctic ship traffic.[20] In the U.S., the U.S. Coast Guard conducted flights to the North Pole and is looking at establishing a seasonal Arctic base on the north coast of Alaska.[21]

Many countries are increasing capacity for Arctic passage. In 2005, there were 262 commercial ice-class vessels with another 234 ships on order.[22] South Korea, with large interests in worldwide shipping and shipbuilding, has begun to lobby for observer status in the Arctic Council, a multination governmental organization concerned with resource development and environmental protection in the Arctic.[23] One cruise ship company, with experience in Antarctic cruises, has begun passenger cruises to the Canadian Arctic.[24]

The strategic importance of the Arctic, both economically and militarily, is increasing. Arctic and non-Arctic countries alike are investing commercially and militarily

to meet the increased opportunities of the Arctic. Concurrently, U.S. policy and strategy continues to develop to meet the rising challenges and opportunities of the Arctic.

U.S. ARCTIC POLICY AND STRATEGY

The U.S. Department of State is the lead federal agency for Arctic policy and as such leads the delegations to the Arctic Council meetings. The Arctic Council is a high level political forum "for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states" and focused primarily on "sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic."[25] Membership consists of the eight states who border the Arctic region: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the U.S.[26]

The most current U.S. Arctic policy is Presidential Decision Directive (PDD)/NSC-26, *U.S. Policy on the Arctic and Antarctic Regions*, issued in 1994. PDD/NSC-26 has six principle objectives for the Arctic, including ensuring national security and defense needs, ensuring that natural resource management and economic development in the region are environmentally sustainable, and strengthening institutions for cooperation among the eight Arctic nations.[27] Of particular interest to Combatant Commanders are the concepts of maintaining peace and stability, the freedom of navigation and air traffic, the control of our borders and areas of jurisdiction, and the ability to carry out military operations, all of which are of importance to the U.S. in the Arctic.[28] While PDD/NSC-26 is still relevant to today's Arctic issues, U.S. Arctic policy is currently under review by an interagency team led by the Department of State and the National Security Council.[29] The State Department has revealed that the dimensions of the review include national security and homeland security, extended

continental shelf and boundary issues, shipping, economic issues (including energy), environmental protection, and conservation of natural resources.[30]

There is no current overall U.S. strategy for the Arctic. However, two recent national strategy documents do address the emerging Arctic issues. *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, a U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard unified maritime strategy, mentions the gradual opening of Arctic waters and subsequent new shipping routes and competition for natural resources as a main challenge of the 21st century.[31] The Maritime Strategy calls for establishing "a persistent global presence" through integrated capabilities in untraditional deployment areas.[32] The maritime Arctic region is one of these nontraditional areas in which a U.S. maritime presence should be established.

A more recent U.S. strategy that addresses the Arctic is the *National Strategy for the Maritime Transportation System*, released in 2008 by the Department of Transportation. This national strategy is the work of the Committee on the Marine Transportation System, a committee comprised of eighteen federal agencies including the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense. The strategy recognizes the potential for increased Arctic commerce, particularly in shipping and new oil and gas leases, as one of the critical challenges facing the U.S. maritime transportation system.[33]

RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES FOR THE ARCTIC

Emerging territorial disputes, the potential of new maritime shipping routes, and increased access to highly valuable natural resources, fall under the realm of both Homeland Defense and Homeland Security. Homeland Defense is primarily a Department of Defense (DoD) mission[34] while Homeland Security is under the main purview of the Department of

Homeland Security (DHS).[35] The parallel Homeland Defense and Homeland Security responsibilities and authorities for the Arctic region point toward the need for ensuring unity of effort in the Arctic between DoD and DHS.

The U.S. Unified Command Plan (UCP) gives the various Unified Combatant Commands the responsibility for "providing the single point of contact on military matters within the AOR (area of responsibility), excluding the United States."[36] The UCP currently divides responsibility for the region north of the Arctic Circle between three Geographic Combatant Commands: the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), and the U.S. European Command (EUCOM). For the Arctic, the EUCOM AOR includes the Arctic Ocean east of 045°W and west of 100 °E, Greenland and the Atlantic Ocean; the PACOM AOR includes the Arctic Ocean west of 169°W and east of 100 °E; and the NORTHCOM AOR contains North America including the Arctic Ocean from 169°W and east to 45 °E.[37]

Within DHS, the U.S. Coast Guard has five key roles related to U.S. interests in the Arctic: Maritime Security, National Defense, Maritime Safety, Protection of Natural Resources, and Maritime Mobility.[38] The Coast Guard's legal authorities include Captain of the Port, Officer in Charge of Marine Inspection, Federal On-Scene Coordinator, and Federal Maritime Security Coordinator. These authorities encompass the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Arctic.[39] Through these authorities the Coast Guard has broad powers for law enforcement, national defense, mobility, maritime safety, environmental protection, and humanitarian response in the Arctic maritime domain.[40]

The Arctic theater issues involve all elements of U.S. national power including diplomatic, economic, military, and informational. As such, several other U.S. agencies have

responsibilities across the Arctic theater. For example, as previously mentioned, the Department of State is the lead for U.S. policy and international diplomacy involving the Arctic. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in partnership with the University of New Hampshire's Joint Hydrographic Center, is leading the effort to determine possible U.S. government undersea territorial claims in the Arctic under UNCLOS.[41] The National Security Agency will have vital responsibilities for maintaining maritime and air domain awareness in the Arctic. The Minerals Management Services, under the Department of the Interior, is a key player in managing the oil, gas and mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf of Arctic Alaska.[42]

The U.S. interagency effort across the Arctic is deep, varied, and fragmented. There is no single unifying body syncronizing the U.S. effort. A single command organization is needed to effectively unify all U.S. actions in the Arctic.

COMMAND ORGANIZATION IN THE ARCTIC THEATER

Establishing an effective command organization is essential for ensuring all military and interagency efforts are coordinated to project U.S. presence and protect national security interests in the Arctic. An effective command organization will enable the commander to continuously monitor the arctic domain, provide flexibility, and the ability to direct available forces as needed to meet the emerging challenges and changing environment of the Arctic.[43] The selected command structure must permit integration of joint, multinational, other government agencies (OGAs), intergovernmental agencies (IGOs), and nongovernmental agencies (NGOs)[44] efforts in the Arctic theater.

U.S. policy treats the Arctic as one distinct area. However, the region is not currently viewed by the UCP as a single theater. The emerging issues of the Arctic extend across three Geographic Combatant Commanders' areas of responsibility. Given the strategic importance of the region there is a need for a single operational command structure.

The need to maintain the status of maritime and air domain awareness across the theater will be critical and will benefit from functional specialization. Informational needs will necessitate a strong intelligence component of any Arctic command organization. A single command organization will facilitate a common operating picture in the Arctic.

A unified command organization for Arctic theater planning will be critical for successfully meeting Arctic challenges. The Secretary of Defense's *Guidance for the Employment of the Force* (GEF) calls for a "strategic-centric approach which requires commanders to begin planning from the perspective of achieving broad regional or functional goals."[45] A central command structure for the Arctic will enable a unified campaign plan that will operationalize the Arctic strategies identified in the PDD/NSC-26, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, and the *National Strategy for the Maritime Transportation System* through shaping and prevention activities of the Combatant Commands.[46] Contingency and crisis action planning will be essential should shaping and deterrence activities fail to prevent aggressive actions, such as the shipment of WMD through the Arctic theater, by our adversaries.[47]

At present, strategic and operational efforts by U.S. Government agencies are fragmented. Theater security cooperation and operations in the Arctic are spread across three Combatant Commanders. Any unified command organization in the Arctic will need to coordinate across all interagency partners as well as cooperate with the seven other counties

who comprise the Arctic Council. Fortunately, there are existing models of command organizations that may effectively bring together all Arctic stakeholders.

OPERATIONAL COMMAND ORGANIZATION MODELS FOR THE ARCTIC

There are many examples of operational command organization models involving Joint Forces, interagency, and international partners accomplishing a common mission in a given theater. One such model that may be applicable to developing a command organization for the Arctic theater is the organization of the Joint Interagency Task Force - South (JIATF-S). JIATF-S serves as a model for bringing together interagency and international assets on complex national policy issues[48] such as those in the Arctic.

"The Commander, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), is responsible for command, control, and tasking authority for JIATF-S."[49] However, JIATF-S is a national interagency task force which provides the command organization to coordinate U.S. interagency and international partner efforts to interdict illicit drug traffic.[50] While JIATF-S is under the responsibility of SOUTHCOM, its area of operations is within the area of responsibility of three Combatant Commands, SOUTHCOM, NORTHCOM and PACOM.[51]

The diverse challenges and opportunities of the changing Arctic environment will require close coordination between several U.S. agencies in order to carry out the objectives of PDD/NSC-26 and the expected revision. As stated in JP 3-08, the cooperation required "is best achieved through active interagency involvement, building on the core competencies and successful experiences of each."[52] JIATF-S follows this model of close interagency coordination and cooperation in their mission "to detect, monitor, and handoff suspected illicit trafficking targets to appropriate law enforcement agencies, promote security

cooperation, and coordinate country team and partner nation initiatives in order to defeat the flow of illicit traffic."[53]

The JIATF-S organizational structure includes Joint Force elements of Intelligence (J2), Operations (J3), Logistics (J4), Plans (J5), and Command, Control, Computers, Communications and Intelligence (C4I) (J6). However, the true uniqueness of the JIATF-S command organization is how it accomplishes the mission through a truly integrated interagency command structure. The JIATF-S Director is currently a Coast Guard Rear Admiral and the Vice Director is a GS-15 from Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The JIATF-S Chief of Staff is an Air Force Colonel, the Deputy Director is a Rear Admiral (select) from the U.S. Navy, and the Director of Resources is a civilian GG-15.[54] Interagency integration is continued throughout the various elements of the organization. The J2 Director and J3 Director are Navy and Marine Corps officers, respectively, while deputies are from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and CBP. The current J4 Director is a U.S. Army civilian (GS-15), the J5 Director is an Army officer, and the J6 Director is a DoD civilian (GG-15).[55] Organizational staffing, along with a robust liaison network, ensures that interagency equities are considered in decisions.

The JIATF-S Intelligence Operations Center includes, among others, analysts from DEA, CBP, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).[56] Likewise, the operations watch includes CBP, DEA, as well as military members from the Coast Guard, Navy, Army, Marines, and Air Force.[57] Other agencies participating in JIATF-S include the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.[58]

Integrated into the J2, J3 and J5 elements are liaison officers from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and various Latin American countries. These liaison officers not only provide information from their countries but also act as the medium to the operational assets provided to the JIATF-S mission.[59] The interagency and international cooperation in planning, intelligence, and operations allows JIATF-S to be successful in accomplishing the mission.

A key component of the JIATF-S organization structure is intelligence. Through fusion of intelligence from interagency and international partners, JIATF-S is able to detect and monitor operational targets.[60] Assets are assigned under JIATF-S for tactical control only, for detecting, sorting, and monitoring of potential targets, with the parent organization retaining operational control. The actual interdiction of targets is accomplished through handing off tactical control of operational assets to a law enforcement agency, such as the U.S. Coast Guard, or another nation.[61]

Another possible command organization model for the Arctic can be found in the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). The AFRICOM Commander is a military officer. Serving under the commander is a civilian interagency Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Affairs (DCMA) and a military Deputy to the Commander for Military Affairs (DCMO). The DCMO directs the command's military relationships and operations and in the commander's absence exercises command authority.[62]

The DCMA is a senior Department of State member overseeing the U.S. military cooperation with U.S. interagencies working in Africa and directs planning, outreach and strategic communication activities.[63] The AFRICOM command staff also includes interagency members such as the Department of Commerce, Department of Treasury, and the

Department of Homeland Security.[64] The civilian directors' responsibilities and authorities are identical to the military directors with the exception that they cannot command military operations.[65]

Rather than use traditional J-code organizational elements, AFRICOM has created a new organizational structure which is functionally structured and horizontally integrated.[66] The Directorate of Intelligence and Knowledge Development includes intelligence functions as well as developing information on the strategic environment from the African perspective.[67] AFRICOM has also combined operations and logistics into a Directorate of Operations and Logistics. Similarly, the Resource Directorate combines human resource and comptroller functions as well the ability to monitor research and development capabilities that may apply to the mission.[68] This unique command organization, where other government agencies are responsible and accountable within the organization to the Combatant Commander, is applicable to an Arctic command structure on a smaller scale.

CONCLUSIONS

The three main issues of increased shipping, resources and territorial disputes are primarily contained within the maritime and air domain of the Arctic theater. These issues cross three Combatant Commanders' AORs. However, there is no single Combatant Commander designated with the operational responsibility to coordinate U.S. military efforts in the Arctic region.[69] The main issues involve both Homeland Defense and Homeland Security orientations of the National Security Strategy. While all three Combatant Commanders have Homeland Defense missions, NORTHCOM's main priority is Homeland Defense of the U.S.[70] Operational planning and activities in the Arctic must include

interagency partners with key responsibilities and authorities in the Arctic such as the Coast Guard, the Department of State, MMS, and NOAA on more than an ad-hoc basis.

The anticipated opening of new shipping routes in the Arctic presents challenges for Combatant Commanders. An opening of Arctic Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs), even if seasonal, would bring about the requirement, contained in various national strategy documents, to protect the SLOCs.[71] Arctic SLOCs would allow a greater freedom of movement for U.S. Naval forces and commercial shipping between the east and west coasts of the U.S. and around the globe. This same freedom of movement would also apply to enemy vessels, creating an expansion of possible threat areas. Arctic shipping routes could be used for the shipment of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), WMD related materials, and the illegal movement of narcotics and migrants to North American or European territory. Terrorist, criminal, and state actors have the opportunity to exploit geographic seams between jurisdictions.

U.S. ratification of the UNCLOS treaty could result in extension of U.S. territory and a corresponding right to extract valuable natural resources from the Arctic.[72] These new opportunities will very likely correspond with new missions to protect national interests associated with territorial and natural resource claims. In addition, the opening of Arctic SLOCs, new undersea territory, and potential oil and gas exploration will also present environmental protection challenges in a harsh climate. There is currently no centralized authority in the U.S. or DoD for managing these challenges.

Key to any command organization in the Arctic theater will be leveraging existing international partnerships. Operational cooperation can build on existing partnership agreements with the Arctic Council member states, such as the Proliferation Security

Initiative (PSI). PSI is a global effort to stop and interdict the shipment of WMD, WMD delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern.[73] International cooperation is critical to the PSI in preventing SLOCs, such as the Northwest Passage, from being used for the shipment of WMD. Due to the sharing of land and maritime borders in the Arctic, as well as the shared SLOC of the Northwest Passage, Canada is arguably the most critical international partner in the Arctic. However, there is no unified command organization to act on PSI breaches discovered in the Arctic region.

A counterargument to establishing a command organization in the Arctic is that the U.S. is already working cooperatively with the seven other Arctic nations through the Arctic Council, hence another coordinating organization is not needed. However, the Arctic Council is a political body and was not set up to address security concerns.[74] The Arctic Council will not protect U.S. security interests as other Arctic nations and commercial concerns move forward to tap the Arctic's natural resources and shipping routes.[75] The actions of other nations and non-state actors will have security, safety, and environmental protection implications for the U.S. in the Arctic. The Arctic Council does not provide the operational level command structure to coordinate the fragmented U.S. government efforts related to security, safety, and environmental protection in the Arctic. A single, coordinating command organization would provide the needed unity of effort within the U.S. government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To coordinate all U.S. operational level military and interagency efforts in the Arctic, a single Combatant Commander, NORTHCOM, must be assigned as the supported commander for the Arctic theater for all regional and functional missions. PACOM and

EUCOM should be assigned as supporting commands to NORTHCOM in the Arctic. As the primary Geographic Combatant Commander for Homeland Defense with an existing robust interagency partnership in national contingency planning, NORTHCOM is the logical lead for syncronizing operational efforts in the Arctic. Synthesizing DoD's actions is a good first step towards syncronizing U.S. government efforts in the Arctic. These assignments will improve DoD's actions across the maritime and air domains of the Arctic to meet the challenges of emerging territorial disputes, the potential of new maritime shipping routes, and increased access to highly valuable natural resources. To enable this change, the Office of the Secretary of Defense must amend the UCP.

The U.S. Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF) and the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) should be modified to reflect the assignment of NORTHCOM as supported commander for the Arctic theater. Both the GEF and JSCP should also be updated to reflect the growing importance of the Arctic to U.S. economic, diplomatic, security and military interests. The GEF and JSCP should also include guidance to NORTHCOM to plan for shaping, deterrence, and response activities, including theater security cooperation in the Arctic.

Also, NORTHCOM must begin campaign and contingency planning for shaping, deterring, and responding activities in the Arctic theater in accordance with existing planning guidance contained in the GEF, specifically NORTHCOM's priority to plan for homeland defense.[76] Planning efforts for the Arctic should be coordinated with U.S. agencies, the Northern American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and Canada. NORTHCOM's existing Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) is the logical element to advise the planning effort. The JIACG is administered by NORTHCOM's Interagency Directorate and

comprised of 40 resident agencies facilitating interagency operational planning for contingency operations.[77] The JIACG includes all of the interagency stakeholders with interests in the Arctic and the Canadian Forces Liaison Office.

Lastly, NORTHCOM must establish a Joint Task Force (JTF) for the Arctic theater, similar in organizational structure to JIATF-S. The JTF's mission would be to synchronize the U.S. interagency operational level efforts to ensure theater security cooperation and maintain U.S. diplomatic, informational, military and economic advantages associated with the Arctic. JTF-Arctic should have a similar command organization to JIATF-S, with the same depth of interagency staffing employed by JIATF-S. Interagency liaison officers are not enough to ensure syncronized U.S. government actions. The intelligence element should be primary as it will be critical for maintaining Arctic domain awareness. Similar to JIATF-S, JTF-Arctic should rely on operational assets being assigned on an as needed, temporary basis, and be ready to pass off tactical control to a law enforcement agency when required.

Similar to JIATF-S, NORTHCOM should consider assigning a U.S. Coast Guard flag officer to direct JTF-Arctic. The Coast Guard will be a primary interagency partner due to its maritime security, safety, and environmental protection missions and law enforcement authority in the U.S. Arctic EEZ. Interagency members should include national intelligence agencies, the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, NOAA, MMS, Navy and Air Force integrated throughout the JTF organizational structure in order to ensure close cooperation and coordination of Arctic planning and activities. JTF Arctic should include liaison officers from the other seven Arctic council members in order to facilitate operational coordination and cooperation among the Arctic states. Canada, in particular, should be fully integrated into the J2, J3, J5, J6 and command elements of JTF Arctic.

NORTHCOM, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard and National Science Foundation, should build upon existing studies to determine what new operational capabilities will be needed in the Arctic theater for U.S. Joint Forces. While not a focus of this paper, current U.S. operational capabilities to meet the emerging challenges and harsh environment of the Arctic are insufficient.[78] Canadian Arctic capabilities, in both military and C4I, should be considered in this analysis.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The strategic importance of the Arctic requires rethinking how the U.S. government organizes its efforts to protect vital interests in the region. Specifically, the Department of Defense must recognize the Arctic as one theater requiring unified theater security cooperation across the U.S. government through a supported Combatant Commander. NORTHCOM, with its primary mission of Homeland Defense and existing cooperative relations across the interagency and with Canada, must be assigned as the supported Combatant Commander for the Arctic. Finally, NORTHCOM must take action to implement a command organization to effectively project U.S. presence, protect national security interests, and coordinate military, interagency, and international operational efforts in the Arctic theater.

ENDNOTES

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